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SISTER

MILLEN

D. C.

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4/-B.

16 Cheyne Walk
Chelsea
6 January 81

My dear Sir

I have not yet thanked
you, as I ought to have
done, for the gift of your
& Mr Blackie's joint
volume. The degree of
acquaintance I have
already made with it.

Thank me that it is
full of a genuine love
both for nature & poetry.
I turned first to The
Sonnets, & have marked
as favorites Nos. 4, 8
& 10. The last especially
seems to me, very
both grandly expressed &

41/-
Successful in charac-
-terizing a poetic identity
not easy to deal with.

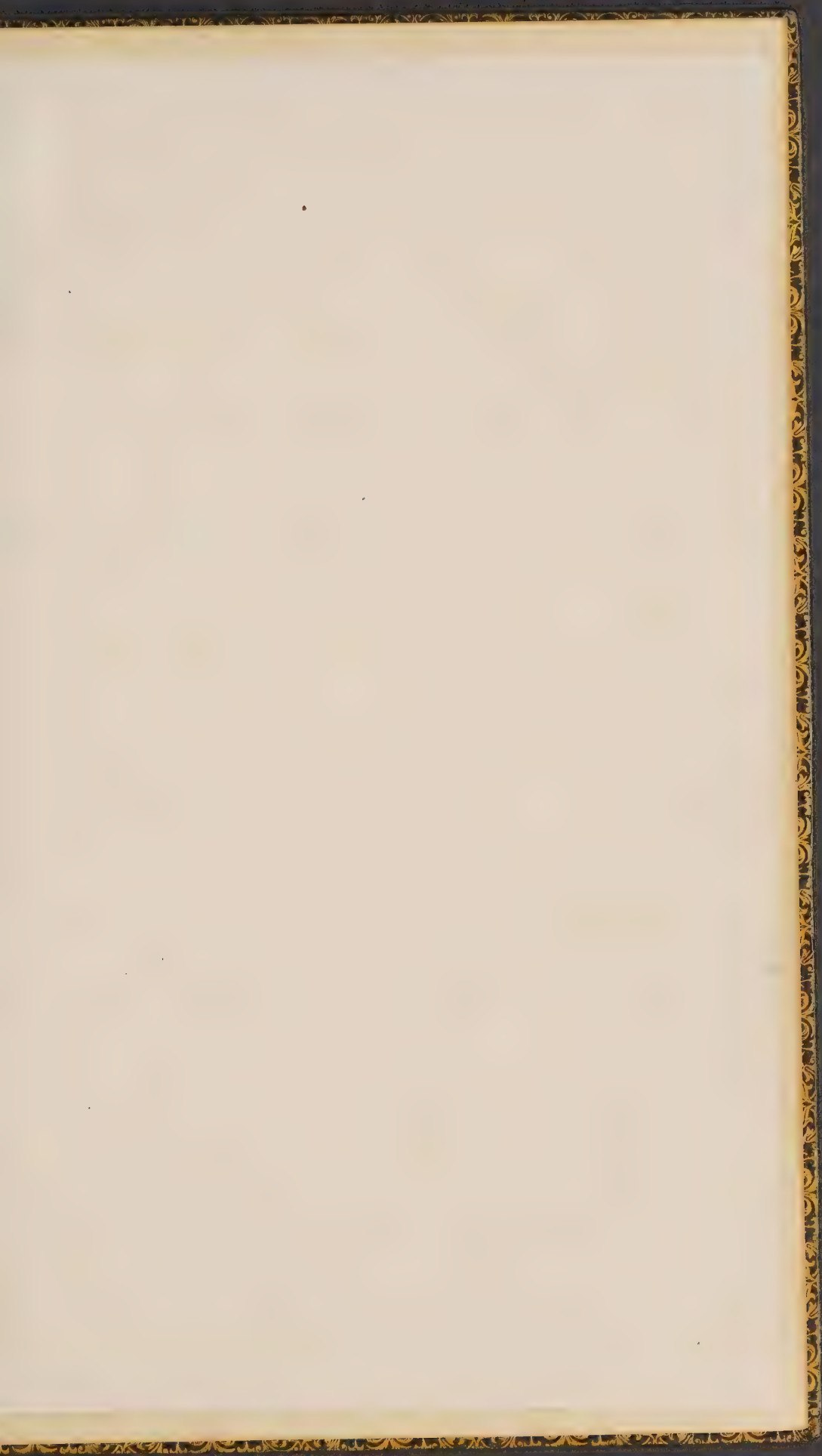
Among the longer pieces
The 12 Odes "to the Earth"
& "for Chatterton" seem
to show to advantage
qualities which, in you
and your friend, work
very well together.

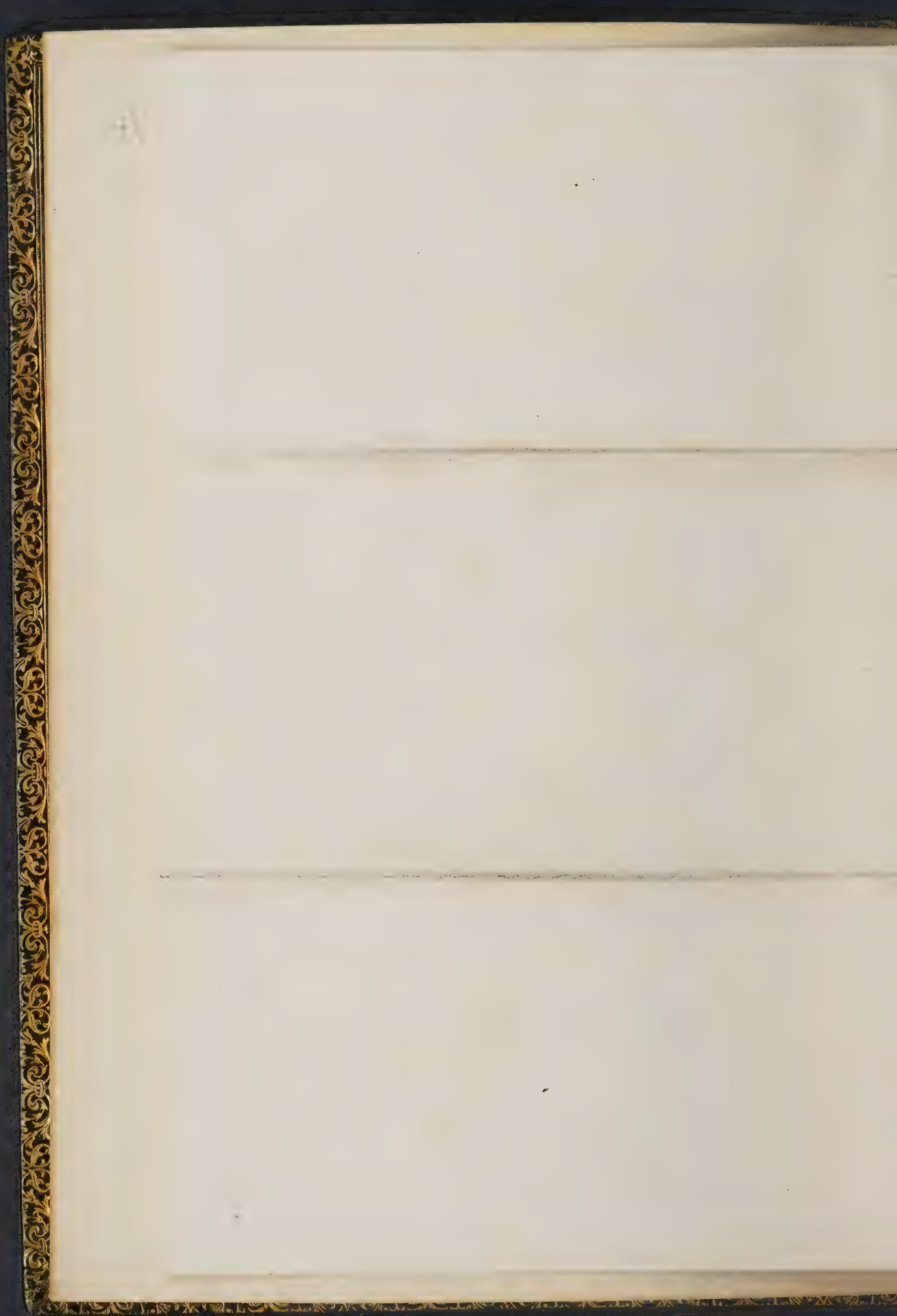
I am, my dear Sir,

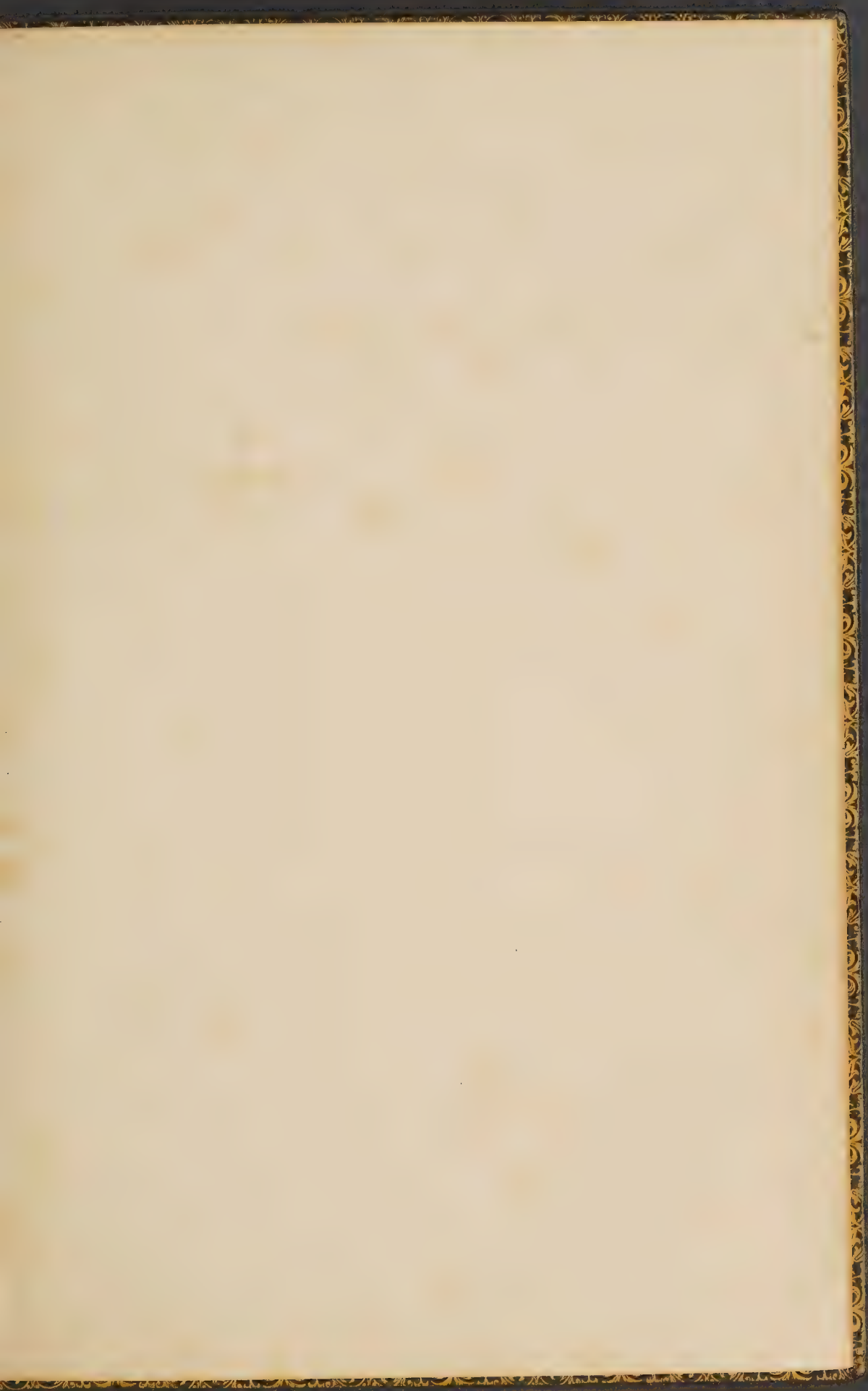
Very truly yours,

D. F. Rapetto.

E. W. Soper Esq









23, Downside Crescent,
Hampstead. N.W.

August 1st
1903.

My dear Gosse,

A thousand
thanks for your
letter, with enclosure.

I am sure
that Mr. Newman
will be only too
delighted to dine
with you one
evening, as you

so kindly suggest.
But you will be
meeting him here
as soon as he
arrives in London.

Enclosed is
the letter "Sir John
Helen". William
Rossetti told me
(and repeats the
statement in his
"Bibliography" of his

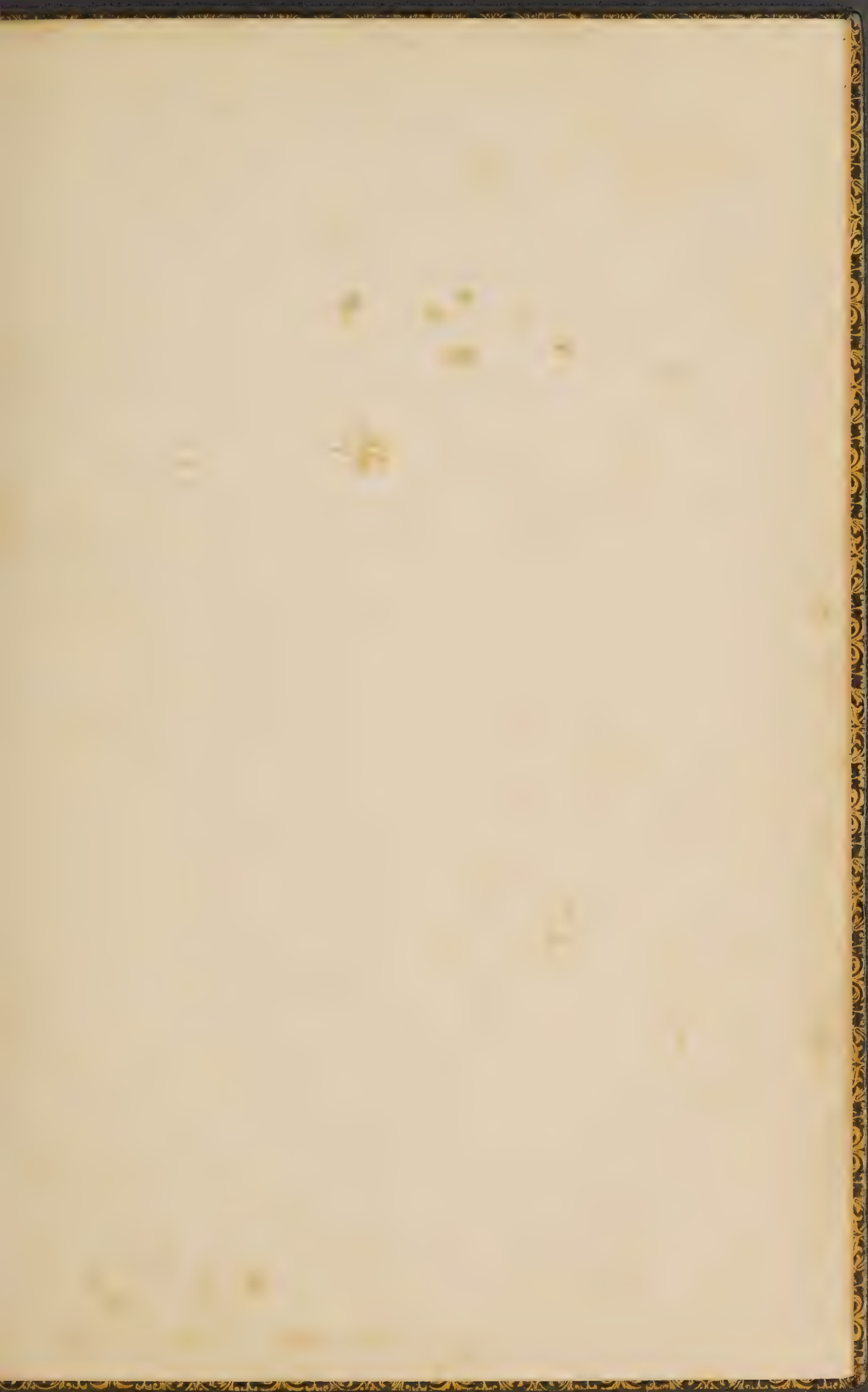
brother's writings)
that the pamphlet
was printed at the
instance of William
Fulford, the Editor
of the "Oxford and
Cambridge Magazine".

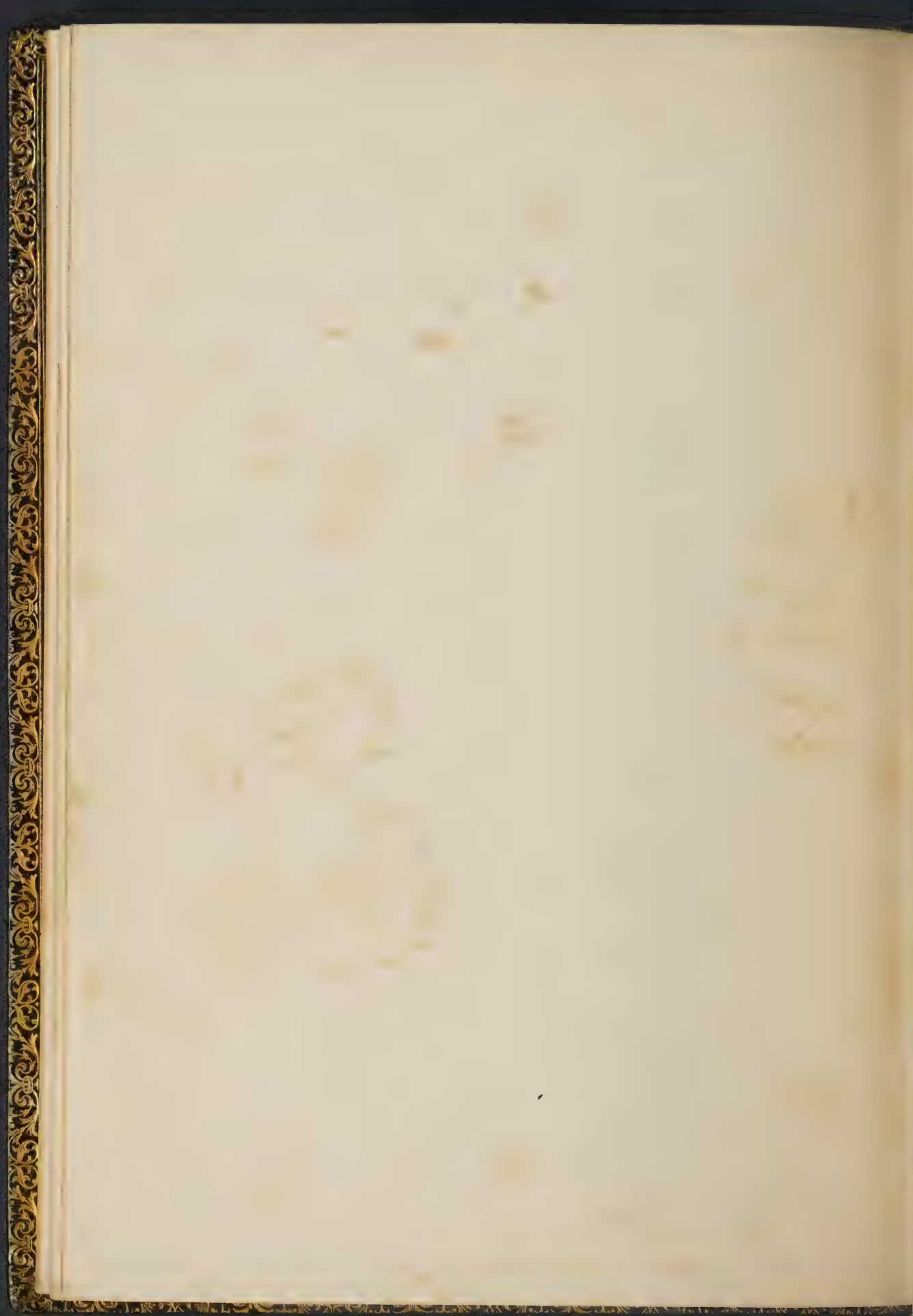
It has now become
a considerable rarity;
the last copy brought
£19. 10. 0. at Sotheby's
a few weeks ago.

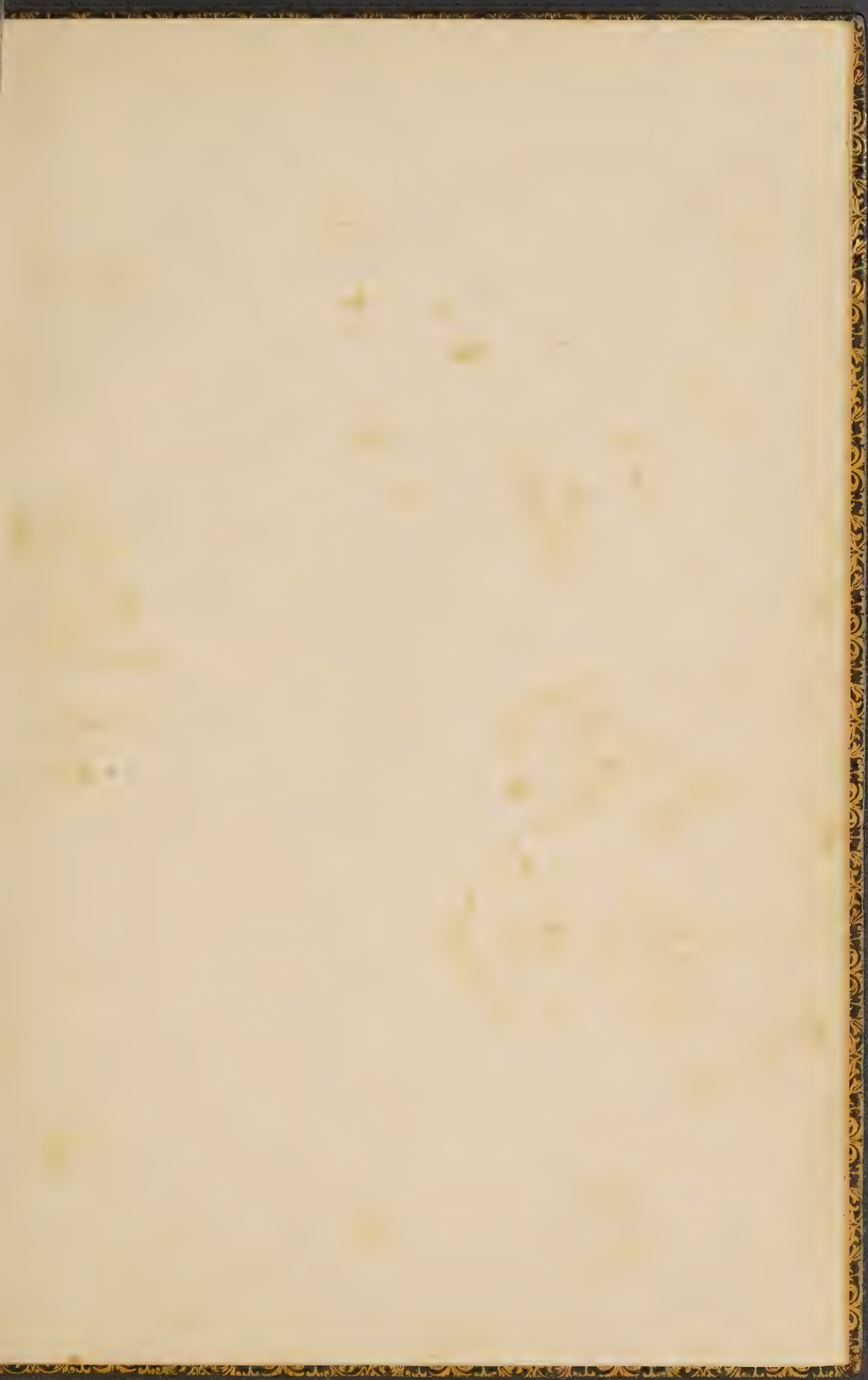
Yours always faithfully
Thos. J. Wise
P. 7. 0.

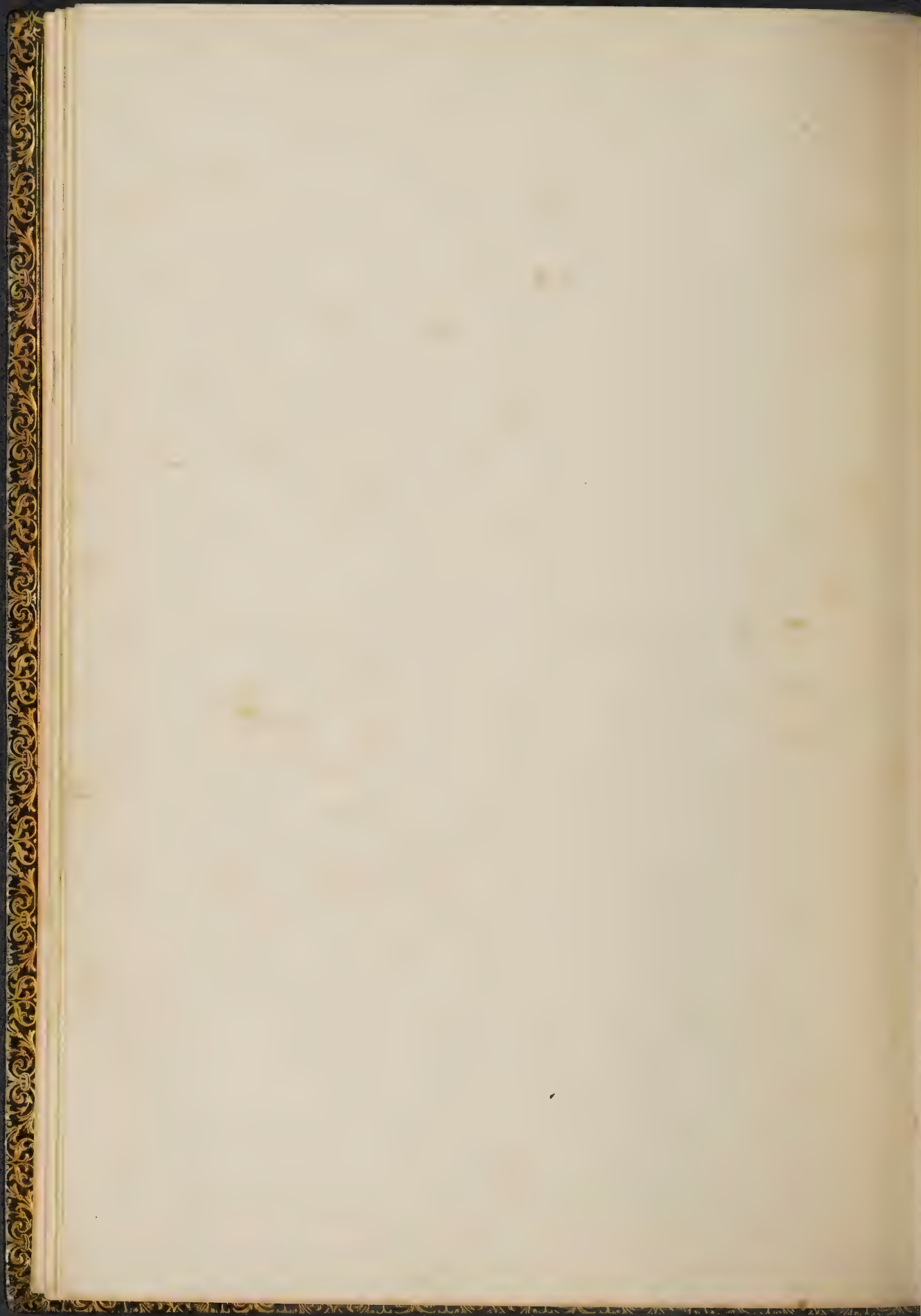
P. S.

I wish I could
find thee a copy of
"Sir Hugh the Heron"
for you, as this pamphlet
is also a rarity now.
But the six or eight
copies I bought in that
lot from Wm Norton
are all gone ~~now~~!

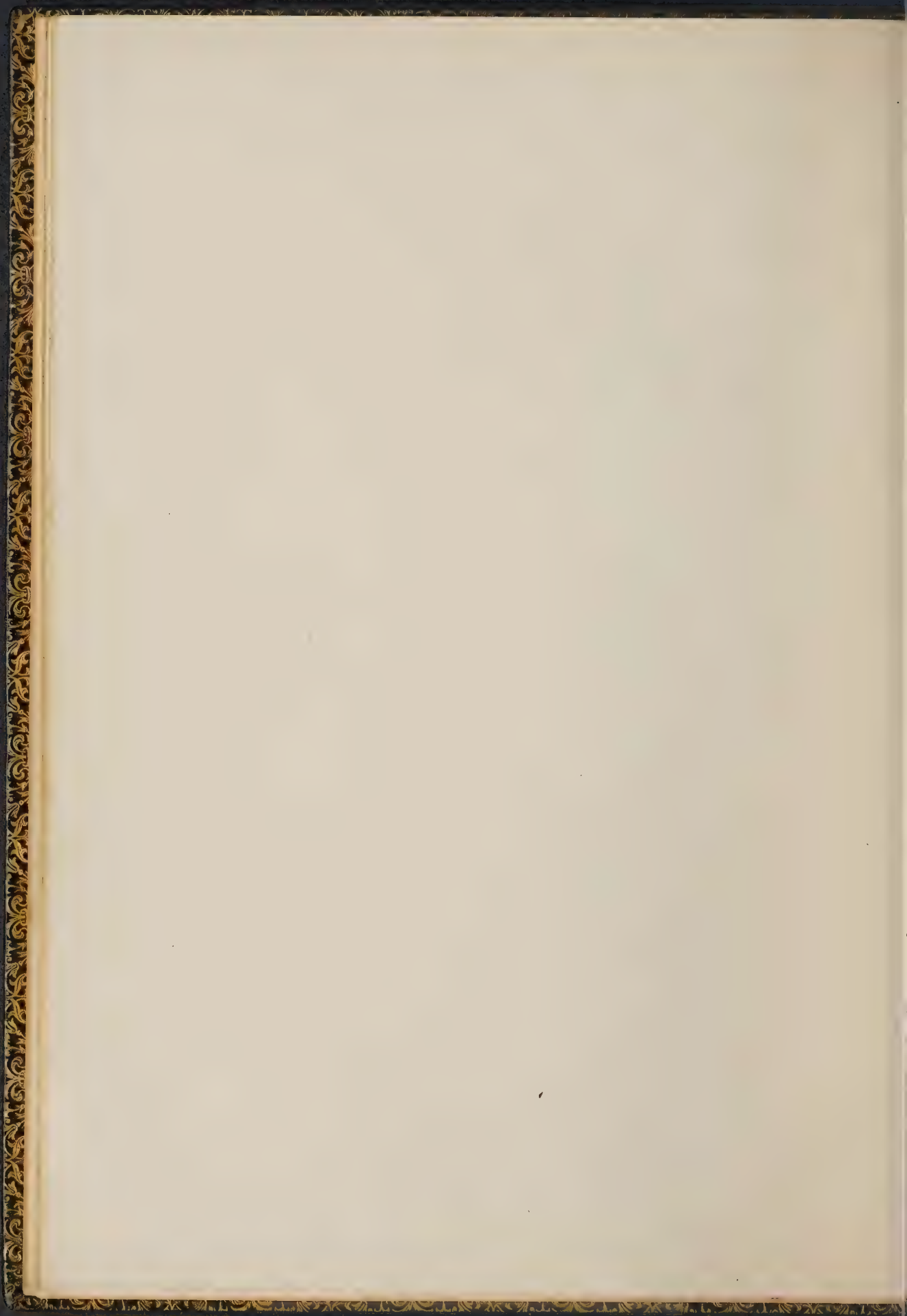








Sister Helen.



Sister Helen;

a ballad

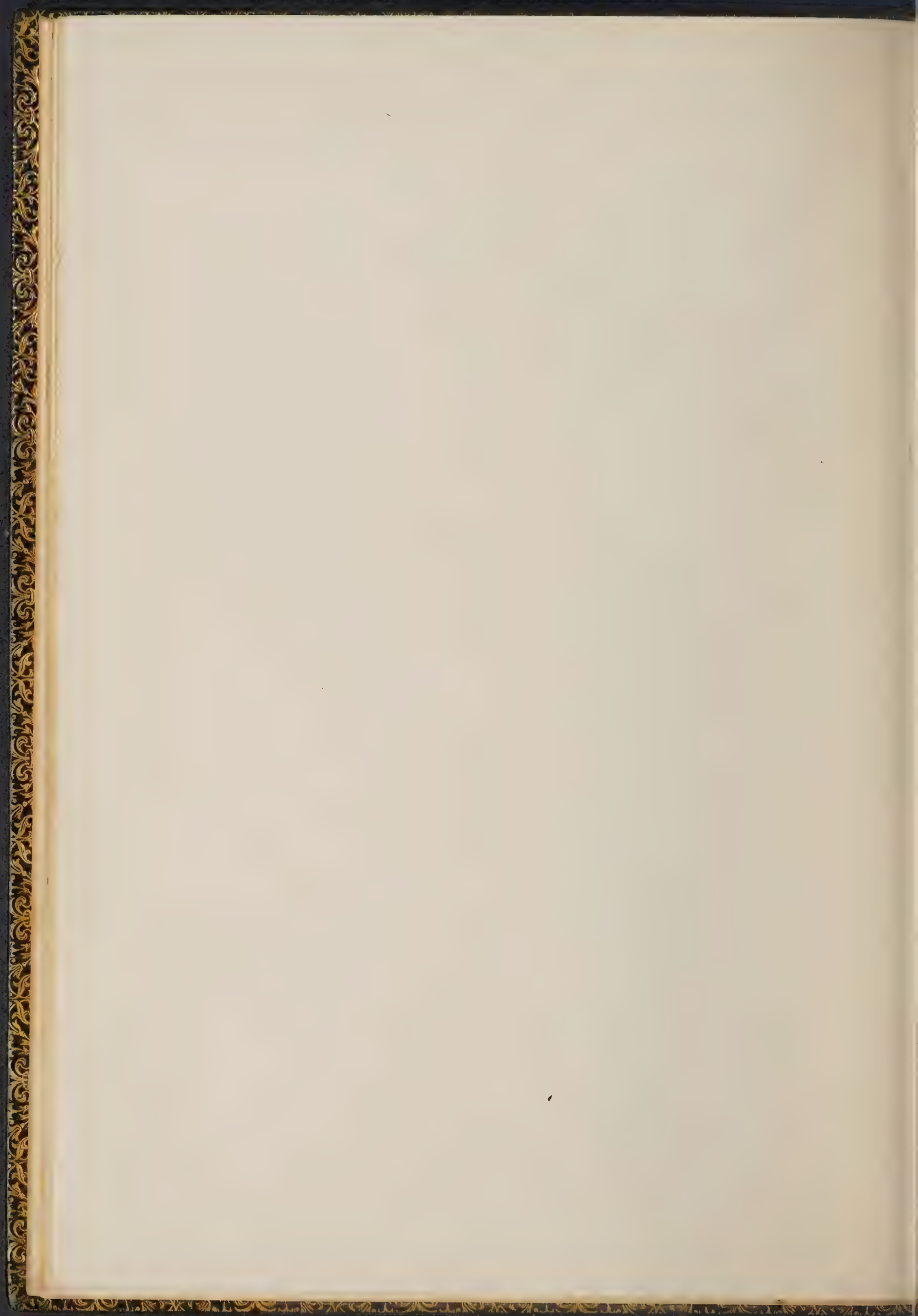
by

DANTE G. ROSSETTI.

OXFORD :

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

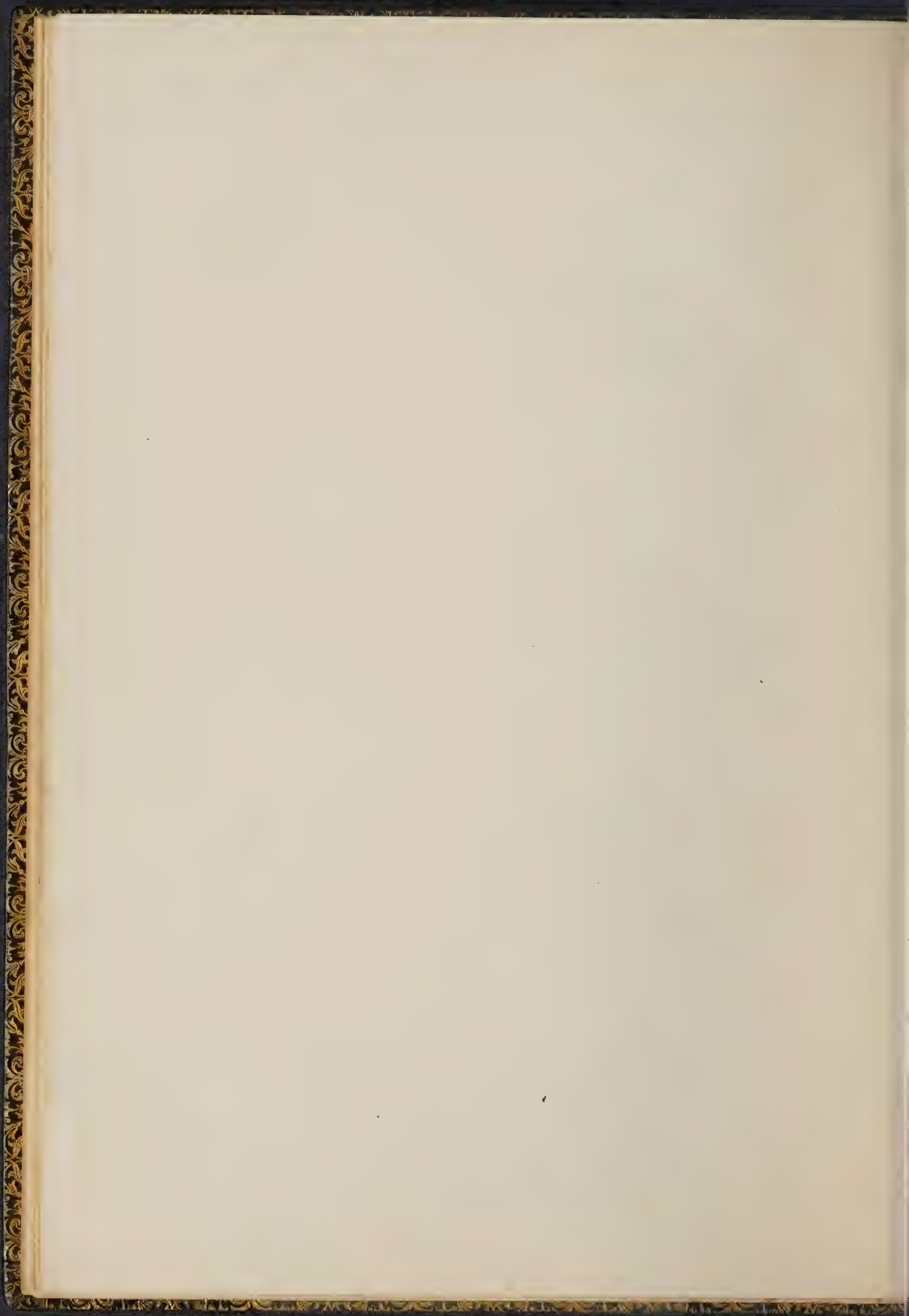
1857.



PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following ballad appeared a few years ago in a Continental publication entitled the "Düsseldorf Annual," edited by Mrs. Howitt.

Those who have been delighted with the "Blessed Damsel" and the "Burden of Nineveh" which the same hand contributed last year to the now defunct "Oxford and Cambridge Magazine," will be grateful to the Editor for obtaining permission to reprint a few copies of "Sister Helen" for the use of those friends and admirers who have not yet succeeded in persuading the author to offer the public a collection of his poems.



SISTER HELEN.

“And if ye have melted your wax aright,

Sister Helen,

Ye’ll let me play, for ye said I might !”

“Be very still in your play to-night !

Little Brother !”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Dark night and loud between Hell and Heaven.)

“Ye said, it must melt ere vesper-bell,

Sister Helen,

If now it be molten, all is well !”

“Even so, nay, peace ! ye cannot tell,

Little Brother !”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

O what is this, between Hell and Heaven !)

“ O the waxen knave was plump to-day,
 Sister Helen,
 How like dead folk he has dropt away ! ”
 “ Nay now, of the dead what can ye say,
 Little Brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Why looks she thus between Hell and Heaven ?)

“ See, see, the pile of burning wood,
 Sister Helen,
 Shines through the thin wax red as blood.”
 “ Nay now, when looked ye yet on blood,
 Little Brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 How pale she is between Hell and Heaven !)

“ Now close your eyes for they’re sick and sore,
 Sister Helen,
 And I’ll play without and keep the door.”
 “ Ay, keep it well.—I’ll lie on the floor,
 Little Brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What ails her heart between Hell and Heaven ?)

“And here it’s merry in the wind’s wake,
 Sister Helen,
 In the shaking trees the chill stars shake.”
 “Hush, heard ye a horse-tread while ye spake,
 Little Brother?”

 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What would she now between Hell and Heaven?)

“I hear a horse-tread and I see,
 Sister Helen,
 Three horsemen that ride terribly.”
 “Little Brother, whence come the three,
 Little Brother?”

 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What hope is her’s between Hell and Heaven?)

“They come by the hill-verge from Boyne Bar,
 Sister Helen,
 And one draws nigh, but two are afar.”
 “Look, look do ye know them, who they are
 Little Brother?”

 (O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Who should they be between Hell and Heaven?)

“ Since yesterday he lies sick a-bed,
 Sister Helen,
 And he prays in torment to be dead.”

“ The thing may chance if he have prayed,
 Little Brother ! ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 She scoffs at prayer between Hell and Heaven !)

“ But he has not ceased to cry all day,
 Sister Helen,
 That you should take your curse away.”
 “ God heard ; God grants ; shall I gainsay,
 Little Brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 She speaks of God between Hell and Heaven.)

“ He says, till you take back your ban,
 Sister Helen,
 His soul would pass, but never can.”
 “ Nay, then,—shall I slay a living man,
 Little Brother ? ”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 A wicked word between Hell and Heaven !)

“Here’s Keith of Westholm riding fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white plume on the blast.”
“The hour, the sweet hour I forecast,
Little Brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
What mirth is her's between Hell and Heaven ?)

“He stops to speak and he stills his horse,
Sister Helen,
But his talk sounds like the talking gorse.”
“Nay hear, nay hear, ye must hear perforce,
Little Brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Are such words sweet between Hell and Heaven !)

“O he says that Keith of Ewern’s cry,
Sister Helen,
Is ever to see you ere he die.”
“He sees me in earth, in moon and sky,
Little Brother!”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Alas for sin between Hell and Heaven!)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,
 Sister Helen,
 And bids you mind the banks of Boyne."

"What else he broke can he ever join,
 Little Brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 What wrong is her's between Hell and Heaven!)

"He yields you these and craves full fain,
 Sister Helen,
 You pardon him in his mortal pain."

"What else he took will he give again,
 Little Brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 O shame and love between Hell and Heaven.)

"O it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
 Sister Helen,
 For I know the white hair on the blast."

"The short, short hour will soon be past,
 Little Brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Thou heard'st her laugh between Hell and Heaven!)

“He looks at me and he tries to speak,
Sister Helen,
But O his voice is sad and weak.”
“What here should the mighty Baron seek
Little Brother?”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Alas ! alas ! between Hell and Heaven.)

“O his son is lost, the priest has said,
Sister Helen,
If he die ere he and you be wed.”
“I’ll be his bride in a warmer bed,
Little Brother.”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Has she no fear between Hell and Heaven?)

“ Ah, he prays you, as his heart would rive,
Sister Helen,
To save his dear son’s soul alive.”
“ Nay, flame cannot slay it, it shall thrive,
Little Brother !”

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Her soul blasphemes between Hell and Heaven !)

"He cries to you, kneeling on the road,

Sister Helen,

O go with him for the love of God!"

"The way is long to his son's abode,

Little Brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

Has the end come between Hell and Heaven?)

"O Sister Helen, ye heard the bell,

Sister Helen?

More loud than the vesper chime it fell."

"No vesper chime, but a dying knell,

Little Brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

One doom is sealed between Hell and Heaven.)

"Alas, but I fear the heavy sound,

Sister Helen;

Is it in the sky, or in the ground?"

"Say, have they turned their horses round,

Little Brother?"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,

What would she more between Hell and Heaven?)

"They have raised the old man from his knee,
 Sister Helen,
 And they ride in silence hastily."
 "More fast the naked soul doth flee,
 Little Brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 And is all o'er between Hell and Heaven?)

"O the wind is sad in the iron chill,
 Sister Helen,
 And weary sad they look by the hill."
 "But he they mourn is sadder still,
 Little Brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 No hope at all between Hell and Heaven!)

"Look, look, the wax has dropt from its place,
 Sister Helen,
 And the flames are winning up apace."
 "Yet here they burn but for a space,
 Little Brother."

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
 Are such deeds known between Hell and Heaven?)

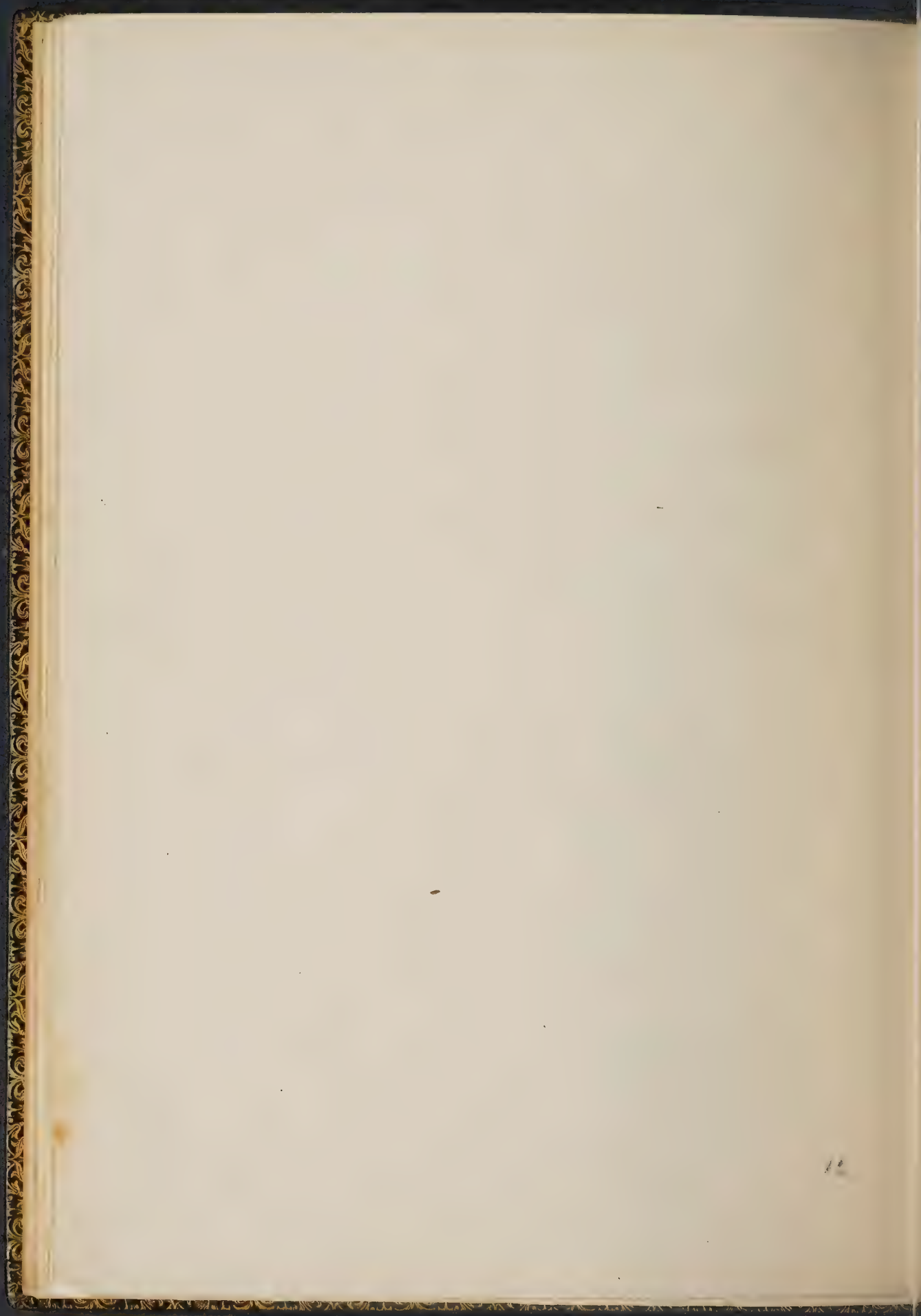
"Ah, what white thing at the door has crossed,
Sister Helen?—

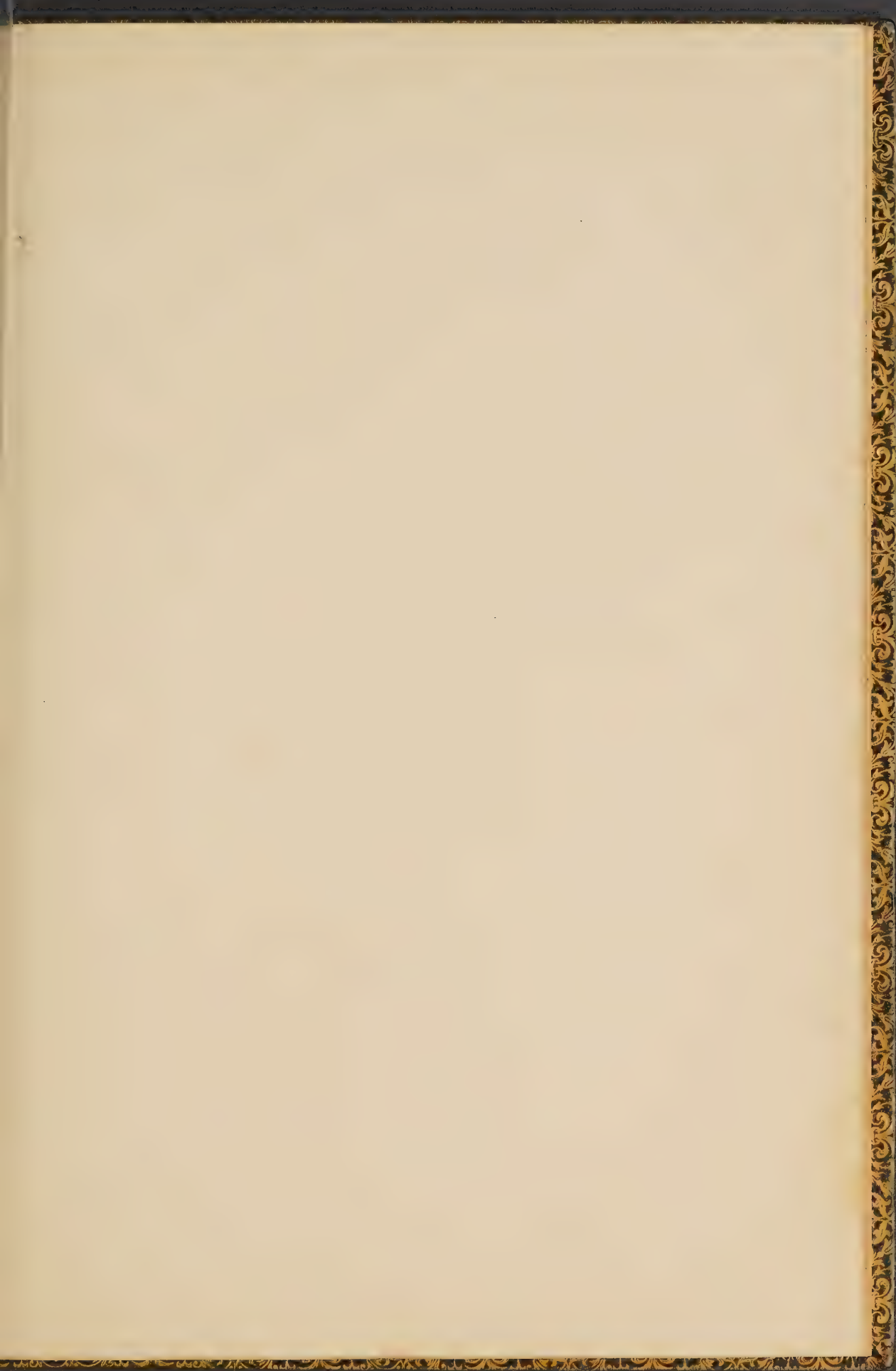
Ah, what is this that sighs in the frost?"

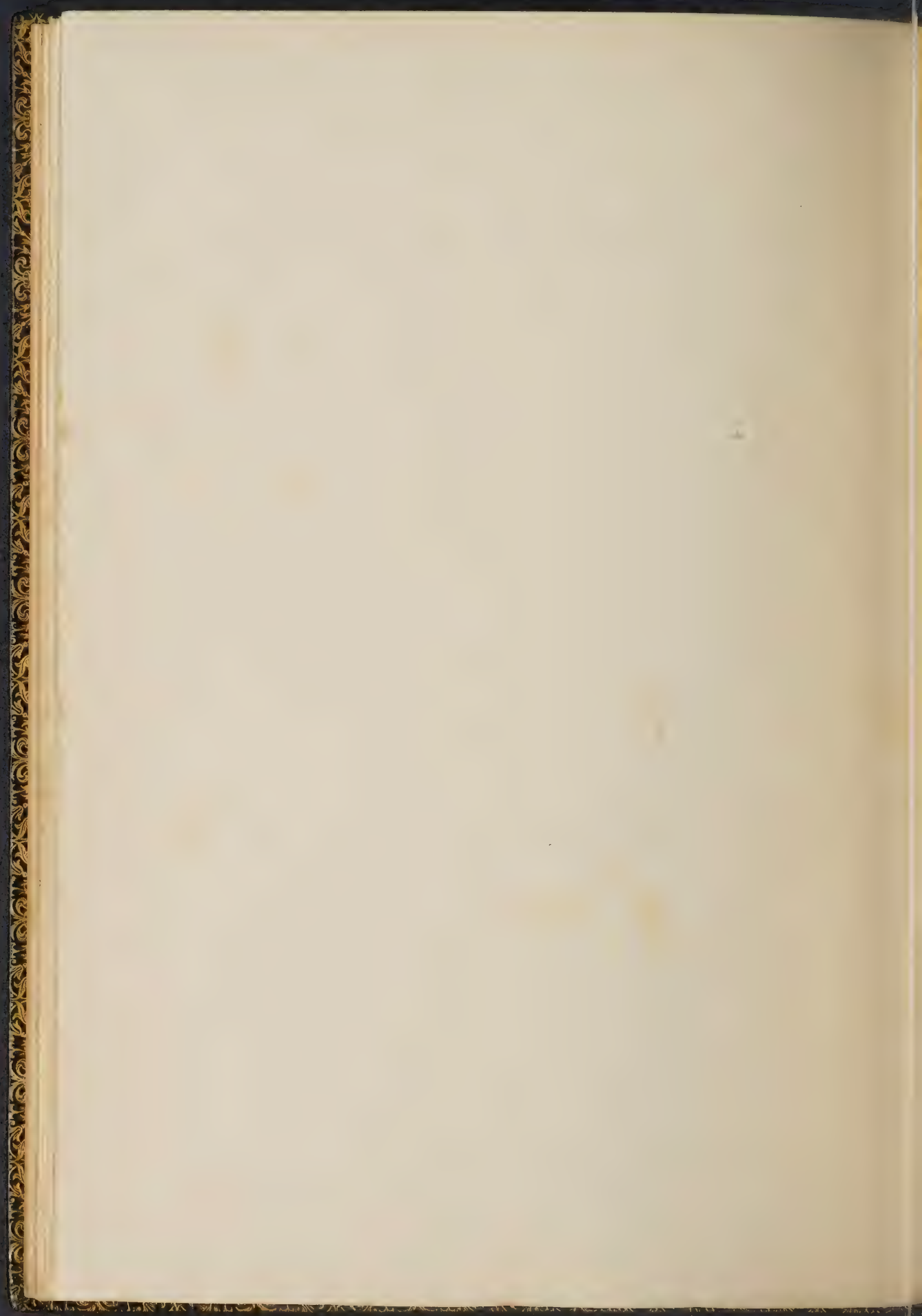
"A soul that is lost as mine is lost,
Little Brother."—

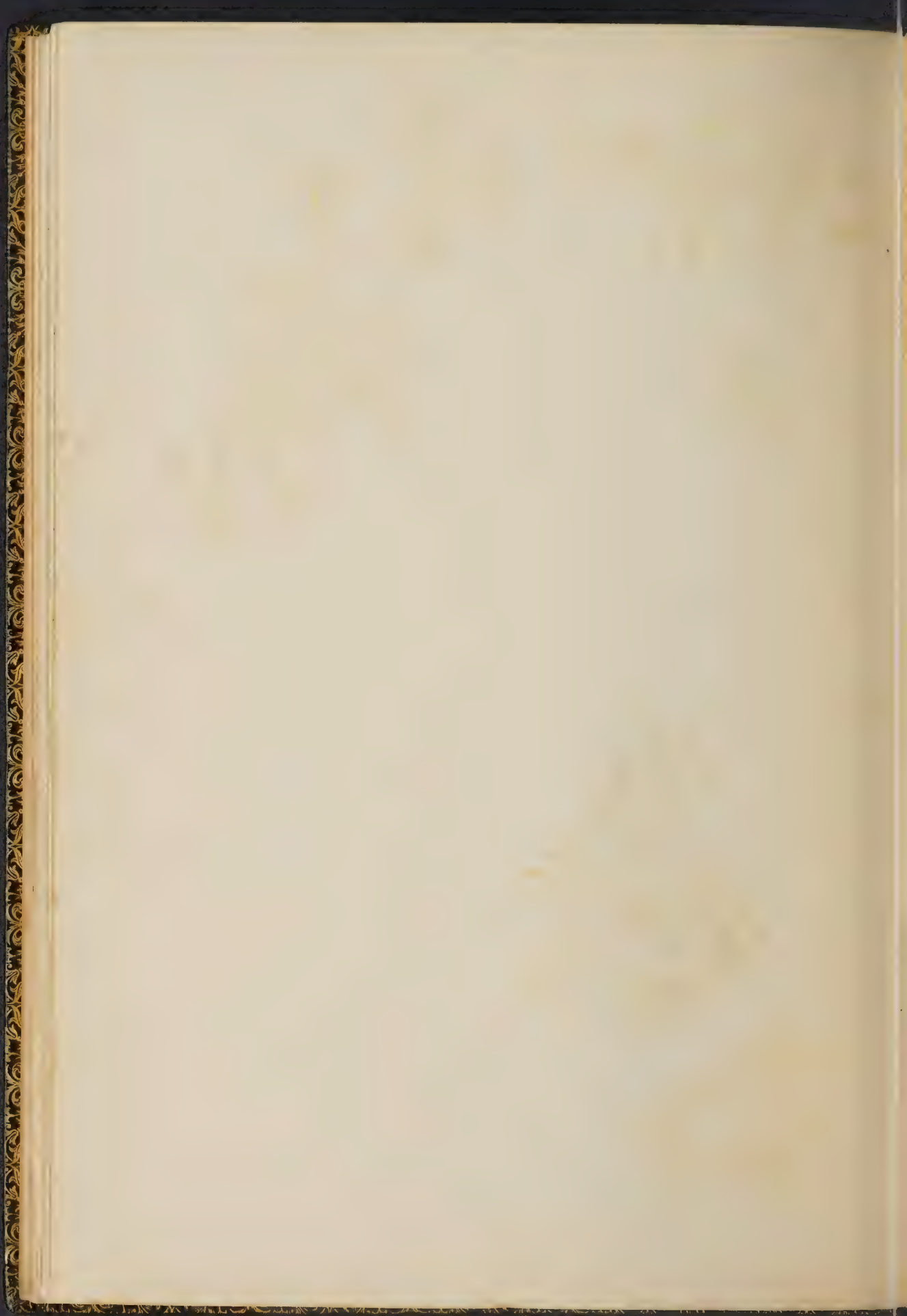
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
O purge their souls between Hell and Heaven!)

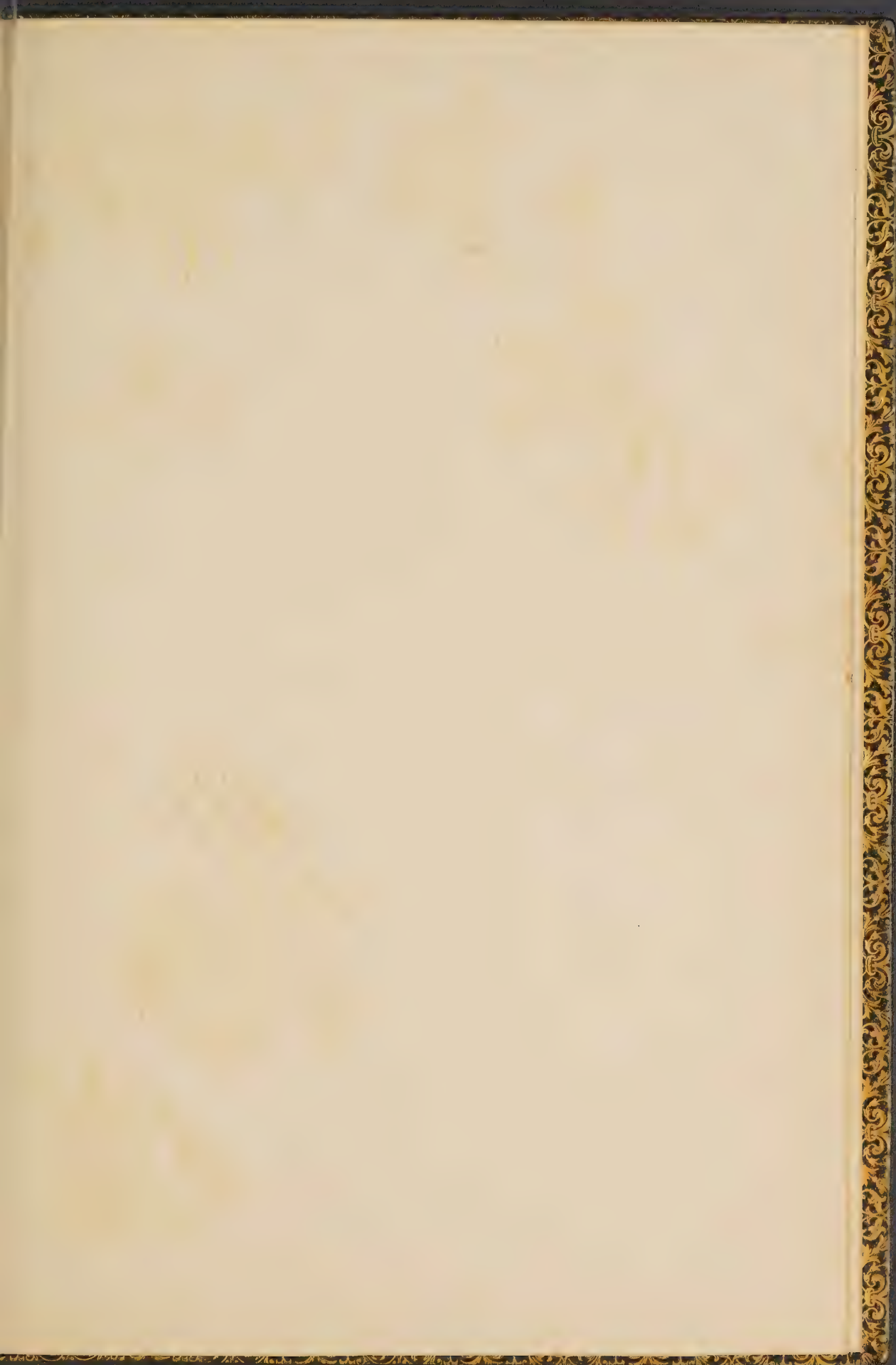
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